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THE BOOK OF THE CAVE

GAURISANKARGUHĀ

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TORONTO

THE BOOK OF THE CAVE

GAURISANKARGUHĀ

BEING THE AUTHENTIC ACCOUNT OF A PILGRIMAGE TO THE GAURISANKAR CAVE NARRATED BY THE LATE PROFESSOR TRUEDREAM OF THE UNIVERSITY OF SIGHBRIDGE TO HIS FRIENDS, THE RIGHT HONOURABLE LORD REASON OF FANCYDALE, NOW IN VOLUNTARY EXILE, AND THE KEEPER OF THE SOHAM GARDEN, AND MADE KNOWN TO THE WORLD ACCORDING TO PROFESSOR TRUEDREAM'S LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT

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BY

ŚRÎ ĀNANDA ĀCHĀRYA

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ST. MARTIN'S STREET, LONDON
1919

drawn up by him, and the coloured lantern has lit the loggia every night.

But I do not find the same delight in gardening as in the days when he was with me. Nor do I think I am wrong in imagining that the trees also feel the loss of his presence. From the standpoint of existence I am living the same life as when he was here at Ivy Cottage, but the ivy, I notice, no longer bears any berries. For the last three years the peaches have not blossomed and some of the choicest apple trees have perished from frost. The flower garden, too, has suffered from the ravages of a new species of locust, and to my sorrow many rare flowering plants, planted with his own hand by our life-long friend the late Professor Truedream, have been destroyed.

The other day while doctoring a

broken limb of the acacia, under which we three friends spent so many wonderful summer evenings together, I suddenly recollected a story told us by the Professor on that very spot, as he sat on the rustic bench under the acacia tree.

It was the story of his visit to the famous Gaurisankar Cave, and I remember with what picturesqueness and fidelity to detail he recounted his wonderful experiences. My mind eagerly drank in every word, and all night I sat up recording in writing what he had related. Next morning I read out to him what I had written, and being satisfied that my record was faithful, he gave me permission to publish it after his death. During his last illness he wrote me a letter of unusual kindness, authorising me to publish the narrative

after the lapse of three years from the day of his death. In a postscript he added the request that I should not tell this to Lord Reason for the time being.

This letter somewhat embarrassed me, but I postponed all consideration of the matter, judging that time would enlighten me as to my duty regarding his wishes. It was on the 1st of August, in the year 1914, that Professor Truedream breathed his last, and on learning of the death of his friend Lord Reason set out the very same day on his journey into voluntary exile. As we shook hands for the last time I was on the point of telling him about the Professor's letter, but a sacred impulse sealed my lips, and I felt that obedience to that impulse was not inconsistent with my loyalty to him.

Had he still been here with me in

the Soham Garden I should have read these papers to him, but he is beyond the reach of my voice, so I must be content to publish them unilluminated by notes or commentary from his pen.

What shall I say about the narrative? As you know, I am not a member of the Geographical Society. I have lived all my life in Mistletoe Cottage. But my long and intimate acquaintance with Professor Truedream, and the high esteem in which he was held by Lord Reason, enable me to vouch for the accuracy of his statements.

The Professor was personally acquainted with all the characters mentioned in the narrative, but I do not know whether Lord Reason knew them all.

In publishing these papers I have the satisfaction of knowing that I am

fulfilling the last wish of Professor Truedream, and since I cherish the hope that Lord Reason will one day come back to the Soham Garden, it is an added satisfaction to know that he will be able to read our friend's words, and I am spurred on to the resolution by the secret fear that I may be called away from the Garden before his return, for the well of water in its midst is fast drying up.

I write these words sitting on the same rustic bench under the blossoming acacia. The air is perfumed with memories of bygone friendship, and I send you the Book of the Cave wrapped in the blended fragrance of rosemary, rue, and lavender.

THE KEEPER OF THE GARDEN.

षड्रा॒यँ एको॒ अचं॒रन्बि॑भर्ति॒ वपि॑ष्ठमुप॒ गावः॒ आगुः॑।
तिस्रो॒ मह्रीरु॒परा॑स्तस्थु॒रत्या॒ गुहा॒ द्वे निहि॑ते दर्श॒येका॑॥
सुमेरुः॥

"One unmoving bears six burthens; the rays uprushing reach that right and elder growth; the three circling orbs are one above another; two are in the hidden Cave, one alone is seen."

Rig Veda, iii. 56. 2.

PROLOGUE

The Pilgrim of the Sky

PEACE be to you, O Wanderer of the Ocean! Have you been on terms of friendship with Happiness since last we met?

The Ocean Wanderer

By the blessing of the Lord of the Ocean I was indeed happy on my last voyage, but I fear that my Lord himself is not happy. He is troubled by a presentiment that the peace of the seas is soon to be broken.

The Pilgrim of the Sky

Ah, Friend, I think you possess a talisman which keeps you happy even when to others happiness seems blotted out from the earth. Even now when the Lord of the Ocean himself is uneasy you are as happy as a singing bird in summer!

The Ocean Wanderer

So too it seemed to me in the days of my youth. I have made many voyages to the most unfamiliar parts of the ocean, and I may say that in some of those regions my song first broke the virgin silence. In those days of roving life I felt wedded to the sea. I understood her so well. The sea was my real home. But now no longer does the desire to return to the sea find spontaneous expression in my prayers.

The Pilgrim of the Sky

I do not wonder at this, and you have my sympathy. I want to have one friend with whom I may enjoy the sweet cup of conversation unmixed with bitterness. Seafaring has lost its charm for you now that you have divined that ships will be used to disturb the peace of the Lord of the Ocean, and I too no longer take delight in my air-chariots since I have come to know that they will be used to trouble the serenity of the Lord of the Skies. I cannot bear the thought that my brothers should contemplate persecuting the God of the Sky. I was looking forward to making a trial trip to the planet Mars in the near future—for I have practically succeeded in keeping up animation without air by means of a new radio-ether exhalation—but now I fear to make these things public, so I

have given up all experiments with air-ships and ether-cars and have decided to remain silent for the present.

In the meantime, since you are not longing to return to the sea, will you not accompany me to the hills? I have received an invitation from my friend the Cave-dweller to spend the holidays with him at Gaurisankar Cave, and if I like I may take two friends with me. The Lord of the Sky has sent you to me, and I am sure that the Cave-dweller will be pleased to welcome you.

The Ocean Wanderer

I accept your invitation with delight. I will not even ask you who the Cave-dweller is. It is enough that you call him your friend for me to regard him as mine. But may I ask whether the Lord of the Ocean has sent you the other guest who is to accompany you?

The Pilgrim of the Sky

I am glad that you will come, and though I cannot read the future, I feel sure that the Lord of the Sky is about to confer beautiful blessings upon us. I have a sister who lives among the birch-trees, and is known as the Sister of the Birch. She is to be the third guest. As to the Cave and the Cave-dweller, you will know all in time. For the present let me say that he is my life-long friend, and the five hundred and fifty improvements which I have introduced into my air-car models have all been due to his suggestions.

To-day, if you are prepared, we will go to my sister's home, and to-morrow we will start for the Cave.

[*Day-dawn. The Pilgrim of the Sky, the Ocean Wanderer and the Sister of the Birch standing at the door of the Cave.*]

The Pilgrim of the Sky

Dead are my ancestors, dead am I. I leave no progeny.

[*The door of the Cave silently opens. The Pilgrim of the Sky enters. The door closes.*]

The Ocean Wanderer

Out of sight are my ancestors. I know not myself. The future is inscrutable.

[*The door silently opens. The Ocean Wanderer enters. The door closes.*]

The Sister of the Birch (*in tears*)

O Lord of the Earth, my ancestors are living in the Land of the Departed. I am alive in the Land of the Living. May my children live after me! Let me too enter.

[*A side door opens. The Sister of the Birch enters. The door closes. The three guests meet in the Hall of Wisdom, a lofty rectangular hall, the roof of which rests upon three hundred and sixty-five pillars of translucent red stone. The floor is of snow-white alabaster, the ceiling of blue jasper inlaid with the signs of the Zodiac in silver. The lower parts of the walls are of honey-yellow alabaster, the upper parts lustrous with a mosaic of topaz, onyx, jacinth, beryl and chalcedony. A dim light fills the Hall from some unseen source, radiating in a kind of twilight glow*

from all sides. The guests cannot see their shadows. Music is presently heard, so soft and gentle as to seem like Melody kissing Silence.]

Song in the Air

For thee is the Light of the Sky,
For thee is the Song of the Sea,
For thee is the Love of Man.

[*The music dies away. The guests seat themselves. The Cave-dweller welcomes them.*]

The Cave-dweller

To you greeting, O Pilgrim of the Sky, O Ocean Wanderer, O Sister of the Birch! Thrice welcome, Friend of the Sea, Friend of the Earth, Friend of the Sky. High Reason has moved us to meet and exchange greetings at this season. Greatly blessed does the Cave-dweller count himself to-day in serving and waiting upon the friends of his life,

and happy will he be to learn how best he may increase the delight of his friends.

The Pilgrim of the Sky

O Dweller in the Cave, I bring thee greetings from the Lord of the Sky, and in the name of His light I ratify our friendship once more at this auspicious season. I have brought to thee my friend, the Wanderer of the Seas, and my dear Sister of the Birch.

The Ocean Wanderer

I bring thee, O Cave-dweller, the message of good-will from the Lord of the Ocean, and in the name of his voice I thank thee for thy welcome.

The Sister of the Birch (placing flowers before the Cave-dweller)

O Dweller in the Cave, accept these tokens of friendship from the Lord of

forests and fair gardens, and in the name of his woodland music I thank thee for thy welcome.

The Cave-dweller

From the Mother of my Thoughts I thank the Lord of the Sky and the Lord of the Ocean and the Lord of the Earth for their good-will towards me. And to you likewise my thanks, O Pilgrim of the Sky, O Wanderer of the Ocean, O Sister of the Birch—the bearers of their messages.

[*A slight pause. The Pilgrim of the Sky sees the Cave-dweller, but only as a Presence, clad in a garment luminous as the morning sun. The Ocean Wanderer does not see him, but only hears his voice—as if his own thoughts had become vocal. The Sister of the Birch neither sees him nor hears his voice, but feels like one dreaming wonderful dreams.*]

The Cave-dweller

I wonder if I know myself sufficiently well to tell you who I am, what I am, and why I am.

Like the sound of a perpetual spring the voice of my own thoughts rises, by day and by night, asking if there has ever been the day of my birth, if I am growing into the freshness of youth, or if the touch of old age will change my substance into nothing. It is not the law of friendship to keep a friend in doubt, nor would it be consistent with the revelation of love were I to conceal my thoughts from you.

I am not the master of my utterances; many a time has the Mother of my Life spoken through me when I would not speak, and She has said that suns by their millions have risen and set, and worlds have come to "aye" and "nay,"

but I have lived unwinking in the light as in the dark.

When this Air as yet was not I lived unbreathing; ere this Space was spread over the quarters of the heavens, unsupported I moved. I live in light by gloom surrounded.

Æons passing, this Space arose, wishing to measure his vastness with mine. Finding himself less than the hollow of my palm, Space retired, downcast. And ever since Space looks cast down at all points of the horizon.

And then there came the Sun, measuring his glory with mine. But lifting up his eyes to me, beholding my effulgence, amazed and stricken with fear he shrank into a mere ball of fire. And ever since he hastens across the heavens to hide his head at the close of each day.

And the stirrings of inward pride moved the Earth to challenge my power. He had advanced but a little way when,

seized with awe, he turned and fled. And ever since he is fleeing—spinning, whirling through the starry space.

And last came Man, Earth's offspring. To him alone have I given the right both to exalt and to defy me. His face is living love unto my eyes, and whatsoe'er he acts or plays it is a thing of beauty to my mind.

[*The Cave-dweller ceases to speak. A wonderful light, blood-red, throbs on the walls of the Hall. The still air is filled with music. The Pilgrim of the Sky feels a deep harmony between the throbbing light and the music. The other two guests look like lifeless images. The Sister of the Birch resembles a pale marble statue.*]

Song in the Air

When this blue sky was not
Then was I a child and played in the
open.

When this ball of fire was not
Then was I a youth and smiled in the heavens.

In the Night of Yore, in the Day of Now,
I am the Same, I am the Same, I am the Same.

[*The music ceases. The blood-red light fades out.*]

The Pilgrim of the Sky

Is not the Soul a crystal drop from the Sky of Light? Or like a shower of rain enamelled over with rainbow hues? A gift it is of the Lord of the Skies, a spark from his eternal furnace. It gleams by night, and daylight dims its glow. It is a fragment of a voice which said: "I will be divided that I may live as the Whole."

In the beginning the Soul was afraid because it was alone, One only.

So there sprang up myriad-headed Humanity to serve It as friend, companion, servant. Yet to each man and woman It whispers: "Whole art thou and entire, Part though thou seem to be. I reign as Whole within the Part." Man feels himself as Whole, but vainly deems himself a Part. The little hollow of the raindrop is vast as the realm of the Lord of the Skies.

Many a time have I risen high in the blue empyrean, and in the dark reaches of the upper air I have felt my soul like a star melting away its substance of glory into the vast concave till I seemed reborn as the space around me—vast, illimitable, unfathomable. And as I descended to the clouds below and saw again the green, leafy earth, and a dim far-distant cry from the haunts of earth-bound spirits reached my ears, suddenly the vast dimensions of my skyey soul shrank into a mere sack of flesh and

bone and blood—and once more I walked the earth, humiliated to the state of mortal, acclaimed as hero by the ignorant.

O Dweller in the Cave, heed not my childish words. I speak but to ask, that more I may learn.

The Ocean Wanderer

This life is a doubtful treasure borrowed from Nature, who knows not what she lends. It comes and goes in a trance of unknowingness. There it begins at a moment in Time, and there it ends like a lamp blown out. Like a mountain cataract it is ever rushing, rushing, rushing. Whither? Wherefore? None know. An inglorious halo surrounds its head, by a black light its feet are guided from dark destiny to dark destiny. Happiness it tastes but transient as the many-coloured circles round the moon reflected on a drifting

cloud, or as sparkling foam on the crest of a wave.

Death bounds Life as fixedly as the two ice-covered Poles the zones of the earth. Life never lives without a frame. Whether in arctic cold or equatorial heat it is cunning enough to manage to live. It thrives as well in the body of a pirate as in the body of a professor or a priest. Once we had a scuffle with the Hun-Hing pirates of the Red Sea. These men are dead to all ideals, all virtues, except one—reckless bravery. How powerful is their physique, how long their span of life! And their ringing laughter called forth echoes far out at sea! Compared with them our scientists and ministers and schoolmasters are mere skeletons and scarecrows. The term "civilised man" is synonymous with a whole encyclopædia of malignant diseases. Why does life grow more robustly in the bodies of

those who are strangers to intellectual and moral notions than in those who would rather sacrifice this same life than their airy ideals? Is life a greater friend of the body than of the mind? Yet can life live for a single instant separated from mind? True, when a man is stunned he is said to have "lost consciousness," but that is only a popular misreading of the fact that life—that is, the "*vibratio vitalis*"—at the instance of mind pretends to assume the lowest level of resistance, while mind protects itself in the cloak of "least response."

But life is not mere protoplasm, nor did man begin as the protozoa, for life lives by loving and man thrives on hope. It lives by loving, it is true, but love is pain, and only through great pain is the chain of life continued. Yet it refuses to die, to end its pain. It hugs pain to its breast, and when the time for death

comes it surrenders as a lamb surrenders to a lion.

With grasping hand it gathers material from all corners of the universe to minister to its comfort. But does it ever succeed in quenching its insatiable thirst? Many a man sits, like Tantalus, surrounded by objects of pleasure. How cruel a fate! If a thirsting man pray all his life to the Lord of the Waters, will the sweet mountain stream come to quench his burning thirst? And if he pray not, but boldly resolve to reach the stream—storm and whirlwind will sweep from the unknown quarters of the heavens and cast him down on the way.

Life has come here to live with but little wisdom and no power. It is like a blind man confined in the dark dungeon of a deserted castle. There is none to hear his groans, none to deliver him from his den of darkness. And if he strike his

head against the cold relentless walls he but adds pain to ignominy, and the dungeon resounds with the echoes of Fate's cruel laughter.

O Dweller in the Cave, too happy art thou to understand the realities of life. Happy men are too simple to grasp life's complexities.

The Sister of the Birch

Has not the Lord of the Earth created this soul as He has created this body? He has breathed out the soul and lodged it within man's body. How wonderful are the birch-trees! How marvellously do they grow and increase in number! Long ages ago the Lord of the Earth planted one birch-tree on the fertile slope of a hill, and from that one sole tree have sprung all the unnumbered birch-forests of the earth. And if man fell one, or the winds uproot one, the race of the birch is not thereby harmed.

So also Man. From the loins of the one first man, made by the Lord Himself after His own image, have we all come. There is no mystery in this. Men vainly speculate and in their pride of wisdom miss the truth. The life of each tree has a twofold purpose. It lives partly for itself, partly for future trees. And this is true of man and woman. They live their own life, nourish their own happiness, garner their own experiences, so that in time their children may grow up and taste the likeness of the parents' joys. The experience of the parent is to the child what a mine is to the coin of the realm. By skill the device on the coins may be improved, and the child may be better than the parent. Yet it seems to me that the parents do not perish for ever after leaving this body. They live in the Beyond, unseen by their offspring, and their parental affection impels them

still to watch over the fortunes of their children.

What more can a mother wish than to be the guardian angel of her children after her death? How beautiful is this bond between the dead and the living! I know that my mother is in the happy Land Beyond. But for her help and counsel from beyond the threshold I should never have been able to fight life's battle. How many wonderful messages have I not received from friends who have crossed the dim borderland of existence! Sometimes I have even seen their beautiful bodies—now like the shadow of a birch-tree on the snow in moonlight, now like translucent vapour hovering over a snow-crowned peak at noonday. Thus the Lord of the Earth has decreed that we should first be given a body of flesh and then a body of vapour. I am not curious like men; I do not even want

to know whether Death ever touches the body of vapour which we receive from the Lord after our earthly death. I trust in the Lord's love for Man. He knows what is best for us.

The Cave-dweller

Glory to the Highest! Man is the expression of Eternal Mercy. In his being are implanted in perfect fulness the qualities of Wisdom and Love. This soul is deeper and wider than the ethereal Deep, and layer upon layer of sublime thoughts is hidden within its depths.

Come, Friend, plunge into the profound deeps of the soul and thou shalt see more beauty than thou hast discovered in morning light or midnight stars or smiling lilies of the valley. Each plunge will reveal new beauty until thou reach the Shrine of the Mother where Perfect Beauty reigns

supreme. Art thou in search of Power? There is more power in the soul than in the seven oceans or in the thunders of the air.

Dost thou seek Love? None can bestow more fully the treasures of love upon thee than the soul.

Leave the pursuit of mirage. Come, my brother, my sister, come to the door of the Mother and thou shalt be wise and happy and strong. Wander not like a beggar from universe to universe! Sad it is that the heir to eternal wealth has forgotten his heritage.

Listen! the bright spirits of the stars are singing the glory of thy freedom and thy future.

[*A wonderful light of the colour of blue lotus-petals plays on the walls. The Pilgrim of the Sky sees a forest of blue lotuses of light floating in the air. A pink light shines on the face of the*

Sister of the Birch, but she sees nothing. Music is heard and the Pilgrim of the Sky sees a bright starry Being in the air who sings.]

Song in the Air

If thine eyes be dead with darkness,
I will bring thee Light within;
If on the battle-field thou lose,
I will bring thee Victory within;
If thou be hurt by the sneers of hate,
I will bring thee Love within.

The Pilgrim of the Sky

O the mystery of the mind! O the clearness of experience! I feel as one, yet as many. How many masks the mind wears in a single day—how many more in the space of a lifetime! At times I feel a saint, at times a sage. In my boyhood I was an artist. I could paint and sing and carve figures in stone with an untutored skill that

amazed my elders. But when I was dreaming of wooing the Muses all my life—not for fame or for gain but purely for the love of Art—unknown to myself my mind turned to Science and I left the studio for the laboratory and the observatory. I studied mechanics, steam, electricity, the power of ether. How marvellous a change! Now I feel that no wisdom is so sacred as the wisdom of the Soul. And to thee, O Cave-dweller, do I owe all that I have learnt. The love of woman I have not known, but Science, Art, Philosophy I love, and my heart goes forth in adoration to those teachers who have opened my eyes to the wonders of the soul and of the universe. I see now that throughout my life I have loved the Soul, for it is the soul within me which has ever been in quest of knowledge, and it is the soul which is satisfied when that knowledge is obtained. The

soul within me is the student, the same soul is the teacher. This is the secret of the soul—it loves to be two in one. This duality in unity unthinking men call God and Man. In this dominion neither is lower or higher, but what seems to be the lower is a projection of the higher. The pupil in me is the projection of the teacher in me. O Dweller in the Cave, Her whom thou callest Mother I have not seen, but in the light of my imagination I can see the soul as Mother—as a goddess, whose offspring I am. The dark "I" is the faint echo of the moral "I." And yet I feel that the Mother is not separate from Her offspring. How beautiful a thought! The human is inseparate and inseparable from the Divine. Ah, much have I learnt from the sky. Floating above the cloud-line in my air-chariot have I not seen how in the spotless blue of the high heavens

there suddenly gathers a faint white mist, and forthwith it assumes formidable shapes. The many-tinted cloud is broken up into forms of gods and men and trees and animals, like a fair city in the heavens peopled with strange denizens, and lo! even as I gaze the shapes and figures have melted away, as though the mighty city had been swallowed up in the depths of the ocean and only blue waves remained. And so, I think, it is with our desires and thoughts. They spring up in our mind like summer flies, only to die at the coming of winter. Thus too do the tastes and inclinations of youth die with the advent of age—the human personality, alas, survives. But it survives, I feel assured, freed from foolish fancies and desires. And even if the child be not granted the full vision of the Mother, may it at least be worthy of the Mother's home!

[*The Pilgrim of the Sky ceases speaking. A white light passes over his face. The Ocean Wanderer suddenly sees him transfigured into a mass of light. He passes his hand over his eyes, unwilling to believe what he sees. He looks at him once more and sees him in his familiar form, seated on his cushion. The Sister of the Birch smiles sweetly as if in dream. She sees dreamily the Pilgrim of the Sky riding on a white cloud in the high heavens. The Ocean Wanderer sees tears in her eyes.*]

The Ocean Wanderer

Whence came this life to our planet? It is a perpetual enigma. Can it be that the germ of life was borne hither by falling meteorites and that it found a suitable environment here where it could thrive? No, that cannot be, for were it so we should see new life

constantly springing up from the thousands of meteorites that yearly fall upon our earth.

Or may it be that the molecular conditions reached such maturity as suddenly to produce this race of men? Whatever his origin, Man is a part of material Nature and is subject to the laws of Matter. Men who live in a fool's paradise have hatched the idea of a spiritual entity called "soul" within the body. There is no soul. None has ever seen the soul. Those who are looked upon as prophets are either silent about the soul or express themselves ambiguously as to its existence. Life is only a function of the nerves. The mind is only the body's danger-signal and safety-valve. When the body dies, what purpose is served by danger-signal and safety-valve?

But there is one miracle wrought by Life, and that is Memory. Yet perhaps

the phenomena of retention is more a matter of nerve-adjustment than a mental function. What priests and the foolish call "soul" is probably memory. Memory is an impression, and the whole of our life is only an impression or record. Then is our present life the repetition of a former record? And if there be a future life, is it the repetition of the present record? Repetition is the greatest fact of Nature. In biology reproduction is a form of the universal fact of repetition. In the formation of a new star or planet out of nebular gas do we not again find the principle of repetition at work? The general characteristics of the new star are exactly similar to those of the old, showing that what we call new things are but the repetition of old things.

Life is like a ship that passes in the night, keeping on its course. When

a vessel cleaves the waves it leaves a furrow behind it on the waters. May it not be that each man leaves behind him a similar mark on the events of his times, and by a peculiar instinct Life returns along the same line when the same events repeat themselves? Thus it is that every man instinctively knows his way in life. One of my school-fellows told me when he was quite a little boy that he would never be happy unless he ran away from home and lived as a savage among the wild tribes of the islands of Polynesia. And he actually did run away. Many years later, when I was cruising in those distant seas, I discovered him, living as a naked savage, subsisting on fruits and nuts and raw flesh.

As there are deep currents in the sea imperceptible on the surface, so in our life there are deep invisible currents of instincts—and the direction of both

the undersea currents and the instinct currents can be explained by the law of gravitation. Both man and the universe can be explained in terms of matter and motion. When we are able to construct a more delicate balance it will be possible by differential methods to calculate the weight of the mind, which will conclusively prove that mind is a material substance. And by another instrument it will be possible to show that the mind has volume and occupies space. We are on the verge of discovering mechanical substitutes for mind. I shall not be at all surprised if in the twenty-second century machines are constructed capable of performing the duties of a Prime Minister or poet or doctor. These human machines will be constructed of such unwasting metals and stones, and worked by such inexhaustible energy that they will be practically immortal. Think of the

day when a human machine will occupy the chair of the night-editor of a newspaper, and criticise other human machines acting as Cabinet Ministers! But will this herald in a new age of happiness?

[*The Ocean Wanderer ceases speaking. The Hall of Wisdom is filled with dark purple light. The Pilgrim of the Sky feels an intense vibration, and the Sister of the Birch trembles. For the first time even the Pilgrim of the Sky fails to discern the Cave-dweller. A long pause. The Sister of the Birch speaks.*]

The Sister of the Birch

Help me, O Lord of the Earth! My very life feels crushed. My heart is filled with nameless fear. I feel that ill will befall me.

[*The Pilgrim of the Sky sees a white*

lotus float down through the air and hover above the head of the Sister of the Birch while she is speaking. The sweet fragrance of the lotus fills the Hall of Wisdom and a faint breeze blows.]

The Sister of the Birch

When wilt Thou come again, O Lord of the World? In this Thy fair garden we await Thine advent. Our hearts are prepared for Thy coming, and all night we have kept the lamp burning in our homes. We mothers wish that our children may see Thy face, that we may depart this life entrusting them to Thy care. Our earth is beautiful, and the sun and the air and the waters daily bring their blessings to our door. Sit Thou, O Lord, upon Thy throne on high as our King and Lord, for without Thee our homes are lightless and our hearts loveless.

Come as a Shepherd and lead Thy flock to its fold.

But not before Thine own chosen time do I pray Thee come, O Lord. We are happy because we can justify Thy ways to our brothers and sisters. We are blessed because we can serve Thee by our prayers. We deem it our exceeding great reward that Thou dost heed our supplications.

[*The Sister of the Birch ceases speaking. The white lotus rises in the air and disappears. Voices in the air speak.*]

First Voice

The Sky is lost to beings of Might;
The Air is lost to beings of Beauty;
The Fire is lost to beings of Grace;
The Earth is lost to beings of Mercy.

Second Voice

Life will be purified by the fire of thunder;

Life will be washed by tears of salt;
Life will be mended by threads of Piety;
Life will be renewed by the breath of Charity;
Life will be reborn in the prayer for Unity.

Chorus of Voices

We will weave a new garment for the Lord of the Sky,
We will weave a new garment for the Lord of the Air,
We will weave a new garment for the Lord of the Fire,
We will weave a new garment for the Lord of the Waters,
We will weave a new garment for the Lord of the Earth.

[*A Voice is heard coming from the direction of the Cave-dweller's seat, but none can see the speaker.*]

Voice

Thrice blessed ye, O Beings of the upper ether! With hope in heart have I awaited this consummation since our universe passed its infancy. The unaging Soul has been touched by the cold fingers of the Mirage-of-Time. Pure Soul is Man, but by the birth of the Mirage-of-Time flesh has grown upon him.

The Mother of my Heart says that in days of yore all men were happy. Their soul was clad in the raiment of Thought, they were burdened by no body of Matter. They lived like floating sparks of light, free, joyous, unvexed by the pull of the Cosmos. Their food was Truth. Women were beautiful and virtuous, but bodiless. Many millions of years lived man and wife. Their offspring were Thought-born and were called children of the Right.

They dwelt in light-made homes on the upper peaks of ether. They knew no want, no pain, no death. It was a joy to see their gladsome homes on diamond-bright mountains, floating in the ocean of ether under the Pole-Star and the Seven Sages and the Seven Daughters. And after millions of years of wise and happy life the fair folk of the Age of Truth would ascend to those bright stars, there to dwell an eternity of years. In those spheres they lived unbreathing, like abstract truths, in the light of the Mother's eye.

The children of the Age of Truth had eyes which could only look upwards. Once some among them looked down from the edge of the diamond mountain, and having once bent their gaze downwards they could no more recover their poise. A tremor shook their heart, they felt the mountain quake beneath them, dizzy and faint they lost

their foothold and fell to the plains of the lower ether.

But there was a pair among the Truth-born, fairest of them all, who took pity upon them, and bidding farewell to their companions descended through the blue ether to the lower reaches. The descent took millions of years to accomplish, and during this period so greatly did they feel the resistance of the lower ether and the brilliance of the light that they were fain to wrap themselves about with a garment of coarse ether. Ages passed and they landed on the plains of the lower ether. There they found a fair hill, transparent, of iridescent opal hues, whereon their erstwhile companions had made their home. They found their garment of coarse ether too congenial to be thrown off, and by their power of thought they could change it to what size and shape they chose. The man's

was of a hard, firm texture, fit for his hard mountain home, the woman's softer. But by mutual consent they were equally fair—neither was fairer than the other. They hugged their raiment to their heart and it became their body, and with the lapse of time it took on the lustre of its native mountain. And lo! they stood upon the slope of the light-flooded hill, and gazed upon each other, amazed, thrilled with untasted delight. No more were they clothed in the invisible body of Thought but in the lustrous iridescent body of the lower ether. And with the body there came to them a strange faculty called Will. Their ancestors had lived by Thought, pure and abstract; now for the first time this pair on the opal mountain felt the impulse of Will—pure Will, unmixed with desire of dominion. Their home was lit by the light of the lower

heavens. In happiness they lived for many a thousand years, and when their time was ended they wished to return to the home of their childhood in the upper ether. But alas! they had forgotten the way. Their eyes could no more look upwards. Will covered their thought and kept them chained fast to their new home. But they struggled as a man struggles in dream to shake off the grip of a monster, and in the effort of that struggle their ether-raiment fell from them. Greatly did they wonder to find themselves again in possession of the body of their childhood, and together they hastened back by the upward path through the blue to their eternal home in the Pole-Star. But their race of will-born children lived happily for many ages in the domain of the lower ether, and spread far over the opal mountains.

In those days the mountains were

like gold-winged continents set with silver cities. Fair were their denizens, strong and virtuous, and they were nourished on Rita, the Right. The roads of their cities were straight, for their feet were unable to tread other than uncrooked ways. Right was their speech, right their deed. Each man gave Right to his neighbour and from him received the same.

No man touched any woman, but marriage, will-inspired, was instituted after the pattern of the Right.

Man was loyal to his mate, woman to hers. All their long life each was faithful to the other — the same man to the same woman, divinely ordained and freely accepted. So there was neither marriage oath nor ceremonial rite.

Each man was just and noble as a king, and so above them all no one king ruled. Each man communed with God

and was true to Him as priest, so there was no one priest above them all. Upon this fair race of men the sun showered nourishing rays and there was no night. And sleep, disease and weariness were unknown.

These will-born men ate their food of Right, as they worshipped their God —alone. They ate by will and not as men do now. And not to still their hunger did they eat — they knew no hunger—but because it was wholesome to eat the Right.

Their opal-hued, transparent bodies bore no sign of age or sex. Thus it was hard to distinguish man from woman, old from young, and the child knew not his mother as different from his father. Both man and woman had creative will, the woman in addition was receptive. The child was born endowed with wisdom of both heart and head. He possessed the faculty of

communicating with God and learning direct from Him whatever he wished to learn. He knew the Soul full well and the art of becoming one with the all-pervading Essence. Happy was the will-born man, long-lived, and after many hundred thousand years of life of his own free will he could throw off his ether garment and return to his native home in the Pole-Star.

[*The vaulted roof opens. The guests feel that a Being is entering from above. They see nothing, but all hear a voice in the air.*]

Voice in the Air

High above the clouds in the Home of Light I dwell.
My days are passed in the peace of Great Understanding.
For their welfare do I visit men in all corners of the earth.

At the command of the Mother I move,
up and down, East and West,
showering the rays of Freedom
upon all;
The Mother is the Circle, I am but a
curve;
The Mother is the Whole, I am but a
part;
The Mother is the Opening Lotus, I
am but a single petal;
The Mother is the Ocean of Honey, I
am but a thirsty bee.
Men call me Lord of the Sky and Father
of the Heavens. They know
naught who speak thus.
I am the Space and its all-infilling
Light and the sight in Man's eyes
which sees them both;
I am the Sense whereby Man knows
the Quarters;
I dwell in Peace, encompassing all these
living orbs of light;
I know the secret of the Primal Song;

the gods are all the offspring of a Song, by them unheard;
I keep the record of men's thoughts in my infinite House of Sky;
From æon to æon I hold up the Mirror of Thought to each man's mind, to lead him across the shoreless Sea of Mirage;
Yet I do but the bidding of the Mother of Eternal Power;
I am in all hearts, save only those where Love is not.

[*The Being rises up through the open roof and the guests hear his voice dying away in the far-off sky. The vault of the Hall closes. The Southern door opens. A Being enters. They hear his voice.*]

Voice in the Air

By the will of the Mother I am the Lord of the Air;

I reign over all who breathe;
I carry sweet fragrance from ocean to ocean;
My song is heard in the mountain forest, but men hear not my music in the clouds;
My home is near to the Lord of the Heart;
I am the Lord of Life's Brother and Playmate;
I walk with Man from the door of Birth to the door of Death; waking and sleeping, by day and by night, I watch over him;
I sweep from Pole to Pole and none can withstand my power;
I am the Friend of the Flowers—from one to another I bear sweet messages of love;
This all I do at the command of the Mother of Life.
There stands the Mother tenderly smiling, filling with sweetness the

Quarters of the Heavens. Yea, like a spreading mountain pine She stands in the soft autumn twilight, and it pleases Her that I play upon my reed for the comfort of all creatures that breathe.

[*The Voice ceases. The Southern door closes. A Being enters—from what quarter none of them can tell. A wonderful white light spreads over the Hall of Wisdom. The Being seats himself to the right of the Cave-dweller's seat and speaks.*]

Voice in the Air

My work begins with the morning light, and all through the day until evening do I toil. The Mother has bidden me reveal Her Scriptures to the sage; so men call me the Lord of Revelation. I shower godly light upon Man's heart and inspire Messiahs, prophets, saints, to utter holy truths to Man. So long

as Creation shall last Man shall not be without a Scripture. I give more wealth of wisdom than the genius of the time and the mind of the flesh-born can hold and treasure.

Many Saviours have been sent to many lands bearing the sacred fire from my blazing hearth. Kings and their peoples have bowed their heads to the bearers of the holy fire, but few have turned their hearts unto the Word. Others will yet be sent, to exalt and purify Man's heart till Conduct be wedded to Piety and all men behold the pure Light of the Source.

Why have men failed to live the life of the Soul? Why does their light grow dim when most they need it? Who shall say who has erred? The Messiahs? The words they uttered? Or those who hearkened unto them?

Men have sinned against their own light, and despite the golden dreams I

send them they think and speak and act as though the sound of my lute reached not their ears in sleep.

Men have bidden Religion throw the white veil of Innocence over the foul face of their irreligious State.

But I rejoice! Man's disobedience does but move my soul to pray the Mother send him more light and mightier Messiahs.

I herald the coming of a new dawn! A mighty bearer of the Light shall bring a message to the flesh-born. Soon shall he be heard, voicing the Truth among the most righteous of the races.

[*The guests feel that the Invisible Speaker has departed. The white light fades out. The Pilgrim of the Sky sits with folded palms in an attitude of prayer. The Sister of the Birch gazes upwards with tear-filled eyes, silently praying. She looks trans-*

figured. A Being enters through the Eastern door. The Hall of Wisdom is filled with light of the tint of yellow roses. A voice is heard from the left side of the Cave-dweller's seat.]

Voice in the Air

How strangely has the flesh-born man fashioned his mind! His own voice he hears, but to the voice of his brother he is deaf. He sees the shadow cast by the tree of his own fancy darkening his path. Through the infinite night of Time he dwells alone in his own ego, unvisiting his neighbours, unvisited by them—like an island in an archipelago rising out of the great ocean of the common Cosmic Self.

Each man grows by the fruit of his own self-planted tree of faith. The race of the flesh-born has lost the faculty possessed by its ancestors of seeing the common soil whence the tree of each

one's religion draws its sustenance. Hence in matters concerning faith a sad disharmony prevails 'twixt man and man. And when they speak of Soul, Salvation and Hereafter each to the other says "nay" and feels the exultation of book-learnt enlightenment.

In the upper ether they call me the Lord of Concord, and the Lord of Wisdom has sent me to teach Tolerance to men. But my voice on earth is like the piping of soft music on the shores of a murky sea maddened by the howling dogs of tempest.

Those whom men call prophets build new houses by throwing down the old and using the stones thereof, and their churches are named after the one who breaks to build anew.

The flesh-born man has never reached the cross-roads where the ways of faith and knowledge meet. He has not felt in his heart the glow of that fire whereby

the gold of belief in life after death is fused together with the noble metal of brotherly love.

One man calls another a sinner whose conscience finds no echo in his reason. How shall I teach the flesh-born the sweet gospel of forbearance? It is as hard to pluck out uncharity from man's heart as to turn an ancient oak-tree into a tender acorn.

But the Mother promises that in the coming age my task shall be lightened, for Man will know the Universal. Each will respect the faith of others as his own. All will see that religions are but iridescent surface-bubbles on the great Ocean of Self.

All life's aims ascend to seek their rest in the one Supreme Heart, as into one vast sky melts all the light of heaven's luminaries.

[*The light dies out, leaving the Hall in*

darkness. After a while a kind of murky earth-light diffuses itself over the lower part of the Hall. The guests hear the sound of a mighty crying, like the wailing of a sacked city in the far distance. A voice broken by sighs and groans speaks from below.]

Voice

I come. Ye ask, "Who art thou?"
Gods have not named me. I call
myself "Humanity."
I dwell on land and in the seas; I sweep
through the air and the ether.
I am man and woman and the inter-
mediate one;
I am the ape and the tiger and the
lamb;
I wander in the woods of dark con-
tinents as the savage cannibal; I
watch by the bedside of the sick in
the home of mercy.

I am ferocity in the beast of prey; I am compassion in the heart of the mother.

I devour my own offspring; I sacrifice myself to save others.

I change—every moment, every season, every æon;

I fill the pages of my history with romances written in blood;

Out of my dreams of heaven I create this earth;

I wax strong and wage war to please Death;

I laugh at Death and hurl him into the flaming furnace of hell—and this I do to please my children.

I enter the portals of Life with strong crying—and with a sigh I bid farewell to Life.

I am prophet, I am idiot;

I am king and shepherd and fisherman;

I put my foot on the neck of kings and

shepherds and fishermen and turn them into dust;

And with their dust do I besmear myself and madly dance over green meadows.

I am—what ye fear to think of me; I will be—what ye love to dream of me.

But I will baffle all your fond expectations and all your clever calculations;

In a moment of infinite time I will take the whole world by the hand and lift it up to the heaven of my heart.

I am the most erring of the High Mother's children, but one sure instinct I possess—I stand erect the moment I fall, and by the aid of the very obstacle that caused my fall do I rise again.

I sorrow not over my shortcomings and my sufferings;

I hope—yet know that my hopes are too wild to be realised.

In a part of Space called the Corner of Pain I have made my home;

I breathe the atmosphere of pain—I drink from the well of pain—I eat the fruits of the tree of pain—my sleep is troubled by the dream of pain.

I love not Pain—Pain loves me;

The whole history of my existence is a constant fleeing from this cruel lover of mine;

I have prayed to God to be delivered from him—has He heard my prayer?

I have worshipped a million lesser divinities—nature-gods, man-gods, god-gods—throughout the ages, hoping to be relieved of pain—have they saved me?

I have believed in prophets, saviours, saints—have they healed me?

I have listened to philosophers, scientists,

magicians — have they protected me?

Kings, statesmen, lawgivers have boldly proclaimed the gospel of peace and security—have they not themselves plunged the poisoned dagger into my heart?

I am old as Eternity—yet I feel not the burden of eternal years;

I am young as the babe of to-day—yet I am wise as all the hoary Bible-makers of all the races of the earth.

I am one—I am many; I am spirit, ghost, man, animal and tree—yet my hidden life flows ever with passionate impetuosity towards the distant future above the heads of nations.

To me the least is not less than the greatest; in all I am their sensitiveness to pain—the pain of a perpetual new birth of cosmos or of chaos.

I am large—and my largeness moves me to face great pain for the avoiding of great pain;

I am strong, and my strength lies in discovering the source of consolation even in the moment of suffering from suffering itself;

I am inured to pain—so that I delight in excitement that brings pain and inflicts pain.

Who brought this pain upon me? Had it been God-given, God would one day have taken it away; has He taken it away?

Had it been the gift of Nature, I would have revenged myself upon her; but I feel no enmity to Nature—I desire that she be endless, infinite, that I may ever conquer her;

I desire to be charmed by her—yet to be her master; I wonder, shall I ever wish to end this play?

Deeming myself the mother of my pain,

I seek the aid of floods and earthquakes, war and pestilence and famine to bring destruction on myself; but ever by a mysterious magic I rise from my own ashes and live again; and after my resurrection, sitting in the dawn-light by the waveless ocean, Psyche comes and whispers to my heart: "Not thou, O sweet Humanity, art cause of thine own pain!"

And I muse: "If I be the father of my sufferings, how can I desire to live again? How can I inflict pain upon myself? How can I construct machinery for my own torture?

I know that my nature is rooted in contradiction; have I perhaps sought to grow at the cost of happiness and peace?

Bright Powers in the heavens are watching over my mysterious destiny. Have they lauded me as good and

true and beautiful? Have they condemned me as bad and false and ugly? Who will say whether I am developing aright? Who will say whether the daily use to which I am constrained to put my life is not frustrating the Eternal Purpose?

I am left alone with my unforeseeing understanding and my ever forward-springing untamable energy.

My knowledge embraces not the whole reality. Perchance my sensitiveness to pain has sprung from my limited uncomprehending understanding. True, in my own eyes I grow from ugliness to beauty, from ignorance to knowledge, from slavery to freedom, from sin to holiness. I make progress in culture and civilisation—but I rise to the zenith only to descend to the nadir.

Henceforth I will seek new and inward

space for my progress. In the coming age I will seek to bore a tunnel in the spirit, to find an inner path to the Divinity of my Heart. But I will not destroy the bridges which I have built during the past ages, linking this earth with the distant divinity of suns and moons and stars.

I will be free, glorious and immortal.

[*The voice ceases. A sweet fragrance like that of pure smoke rising from an altar pervades the Hall and a splendour like that of early morning steals over the upper parts. A voice is heard in the direction of the East.*]

Voice

I am the Unnamed and the Unnamable One;

I am not of the kin of the shadows who spin the rolling globes of Time and Space;

I am not the source of the perpetual stream which floodeth the spheres of the breathing and of those who live unbreathing;

I wander not among the whirling stars of your love;

I care not to move on the surface of the ocean of your joy;

I breathe not the air of your mountains;

I lift not my hands to bless the gods of your twilight;

My pilgrim eyes frequent not the meeting-place where the river of tears mingles with the river of wailing;

I sit apart, alone, indifferent, and weave a garland of sea-flowers—of Ecstasy and Liberation and Blessedness and Union.

They sang unto me the seven-headed hymn with its three parts in the highest region. Ye have not heard that hymn.

They sent to my door bay horses—eager to traverse their appointed paths and the mazy courses of the universe. Unwearied are they and fleet of foot. Not ye it was who sent those horses.

I heard the roar of the red bull, bellowing for the kine through heaven and earth. Have ye heard the echo of his roar?

The Swan sitteth with one foot in the ocean and one foot in the ether; so easily doth he move that the swiftest runner cannot overtake him. If he lift up his foot from out the waters—the day will die, the night will be no more. Have ye given milk to the Swan?

The dark brown mares run swiftly up the mountain tracks, so that no eye can follow them. Ye wish not to pursue them.

There is a stream which floweth upon

the tableland of the high-floating fleecy clouds. I am he who moveth—self-irradiating—upon its waters.

In the still air encircling all the luminous orbs I am the very sun to seeing eyes. I carry a weapon—a hundred-edged — wherewith I make the heavens visible;

I am he who strode the three steps according to the ordinances; the fourth step I take according to my will;

I am the honey-stream for all;

One summer the house-dweller lost seven cows upon the high mountains; and he stood upon the pine-needle peak and called aloud: "Come, come." I heard his cry.

The cow brought forth her calf; and the young one was fain to stand and suck the mother, but he fell to the ground again and yet again.

And the mother licked the calf. I stood, wishing the calf to rise again, for I knew: Great is the strength of that which is yet to be full-grown.

The red hawk, descending from the firmament on still, spread wings, beholdeth the rising clouds and hideth behind the shadows of the lonely peaks. Ye have not seen his glowing eyes.

The cloud-waters desiring welcome come to the sacred grass; wishing to satisfy the gods, they sit under the scattering rays of the sun. Have ye heard their speech of mutual confidence?

Ye have not seen the forest or the tree whereof the gods fashioned the speeding comets and the Milky Way, and the opulent waters encompassing them all, and the ever-stationary, undecaying heaven-world, giving shelter to the deities

through unnumbered days and dawns.

I am the Well of Satisfaction to the gods.

Ye have not seen the Fire—the Eldest-born—who smiled before the eyes of Eternity; whose birthplace is Intelligence. In the days of old He was both the bull and the cow. He enjoyeth the fruits of the Tree of Sacrifice; in the supreme heaven He is both non-existent and existent. He abideth in the dwelling of His neighbour in the region of the scattering rays and the glimmering gloom and the receptive waters. He waketh His parents as the sun his splendour. Dawn ascendeth to bring His song to Man.

Ye have not seen Him who as soon as manifested is vast and wise, who pervadeth the universe, who

guardeth the path of deities and men, of birds and beasts and fishes.

The moon, the sun and the rains are the priests of the Celestials; animated with one purpose they praise Him. They pray for the vision of the swift Chariot of Ambrosia; they ask to be borne away in the many-coloured Car of Sacrifice, flying the banner of every offering. Who has seen His third manifestation?

Ye have not known the capacious Ocean of Riches, who is of many births, who beholdeth the heart of humanity, who waiteth in the cloud in the neighbourhood of the hidden firmament, who visiteth the appointed place in the midst of the celestial waters.

The two observers of Truth and the two possessors of Wisdom sustain Him—measuring the strength of

Time. The deities have pondered in their mind on that Navel of the Universe—movable and immovable—and have called Him the Thread of Existence and have blessed Him with happiness.

Ye have not heard of the daughter who brought forth her father and of the father who brought forth his daughter. Eternity is the sweet daughter, Intelligence is the stern father.

Ye have not seen the great cloud of dust which covered the firmament when the gods danced in the pool of their abode.

Once when morning was shining on the sea the Bird laid a golden egg; and it was stored away in the hidden firmament for the coming of the twain—Life and Death. Ye have not seen the light of that Morning.

Ye have breathed that atmosphere which the Unbreathing One breathed into the vast gloom—like a smith kindling fire with the bellows. O Man, when in thy heart the father shall again bring forth the daughter, then shalt thou be like unto the form of the daughter; then shalt thou no more breathe the breath which the Unbreathing One breathed into the vast gloom.

Ye have not marked His footsteps—when He cometh the flowering grasses spring up, lakes come to life, fair as the dwellings of the gods, with lotuses—red and white and blue.

Ye have not seen Him come with winged steeds to succour one drowning in the ocean at the world's end, sorely vexed in heart.

Ye have not seen the falcon—beautiful,

purple-tinted, unassailable — bearing in his claws to you the immeasurable Food—the Food which by its potency awaketh.

Ye have not seen His beaming eyes when ye say "We triumph."

Ye have not seen the cows when seemingly they graze, tarrying on the outskirts of the forest at eventide.

Ye have not seen the trembling of the firmament when the fire of His wrath smiteth the air.

The wandering cloud-mare of the skies is tethered to the indestructible ether; ye have not seen the earth-foal drawing its milk from her. In that moist place, blessed by the droppings of the sacred milk, the Tree of Heaven sprung up and spread its branches.

As cattle hasten to the stall at evenfall, as the warrior hasteneth to his horse before the battle,

as the kindly, milk-giving cow hasteneth to her calf—so hasteneth the cloud-mare of the firmament unto you.

Ye have not seen the woman called Faith, of the family of Love, who kindleth the fire at the head of the altar at dawn, at noon-day and at the setting of the sun.

Ye have not been the friends of Him whose friends are never slain or overcome, who consigneth to lower darkness those who seek to harm or wound or slay His comrades. He frustrateth the purpose of them who hate His playmates, He baffleth the weapon of them who desire to overpower His lovers.

Ye have not seen at dawn how the blades of the sacred grass turn eastwards; they spread far and wide, affording a pleasant seat for Eternity.

Ye have not seen those Doors—divine

Doors, spacious, admitting all, giving easy entry to the gods.

Ye have not seen those two white birds who shower blossoms upon the heads of the gods when musing they sit by the fireside.

One of the birds entereth the firmament; she contemplateth the whole universe;

The other, with mind mature, seeth her nigh at hand;

She sporteth with the mother, the mother sporteth with her;

Wise seers through their hymns make into many forms the Bird which is only One;

She hath built fourteen great nests; her thousand manifestations are in a thousand places;

Ye have not seen the path by which the other goeth to drink of sacrificial nectar.

Ye have not seen the two Friends—

who are pleasant as two fortunate days, longing as two oxen for pasture, affectionate as two parents, smiting as two maddened elephants smiting the foe, bright as two water-born jewels, swift as two flying birds with forms like the mind-born moon, sweet-voiced as two sounding clouds, honey-mouthed as two golden bees, fierce as two blazing forest-fires, magnanimous as two princes hastening to give protection, toiling as two labourers bathed in sweat, pleasing to the eyes as two luminaries in the clear heavens.

Once He brought down from the upper to the lower ocean the rain-drops of heaven. In the upper ocean the waters stood, held in check by the gods; they were set free and sent forth over the plains.

Ye have not seen the secret path

traversed by the gods when they ascended to restrain the waters which flow from that vast ocean to this vast ocean.

Ye have not seen the ancient, brown-tinted healing plants, generated for the gods before the Three Ages were; they bear abundant flowers and fruit and triumph over sickness — like victorious horses they bear men safe beyond disease. Falling from heaven these plants said: "The man whom living we pervade shall never perish." Seek, O Humanity, seek these universal, all-pervading plants, and they shall come to thee, like flying streams, to soothe and cleanse. As soon as taken in the hand they make the sick man whole, and the soul of the malady perisheth—even as life is driven out at the touch of the cloud-fire.

Approach, O Humanity, the ever-existing men, who live with their mind fastened on the Golden-feathered One, who from their abode in that mountain which riseth above the mid-heaven behold the Universe, who cast their wisdom afar over the dwellings of mankind—as altar-fires scatter flames or archers their arrows. Like the lightly falling foot of a bird perching upon a tree, their feet tread gently the sleeping pathways of thine evening-tinted, drowsy villages.

Verily they know the threads of the warp and the threads of the woof; they have seen them who weave this cloth, assiduous in united exertion.

They speak in due season what should be said;

They teach those words in the sunlit world that are to be spoken

in the star-illumined world by the son, instructed by the father abiding below;

They guard the ambrosial waters which flow upwards and downwards;

They comprehend all—but contemplate the world under a different and nameless manifestation;

They are the steady lights—swifter than thought, stronger than love—stationed among forward-moving humanity to show the way to happiness;

Among them there is One whom all the gods approach with reverence; from the waters which flow toward the sun he hath drawn Life and placed it on the lotus-leaf—the Life which is the head and pillar of the Universe.

Pray unto Him, O Man, for life imperishable!

Mine ears are turned unto Him, mine eyes behold Him; the light which self-irradiateth in my heart yearneth to love Him; my mind—receptacle of distant and coming events—hasteneth towards Him.

O all ye five Races of Men, verily I say unto you, your eyes shall behold your perplexities, your infirmities, your iniquities, your adversaries, fleeing before your face—like a band of fast-flying thieves shining in the desert.

All my own attendants shall henceforth be with you—Power, Wisdom, Pity, Charity, Equality, Liberty, Unity, Progress, Truth, Goodness, Beauty and Love.

And I will sit on the high bank of the Brook of Delight and listen for the sound of His footfalls.

[*Profound silence fills the Hall of*

Wisdom. The light still lingers among the arches of the roof.]

The Pilgrim of the Sky

It is the Voice of the Soul which never descends to the sky.

The Ocean Wanderer

It is the Voice of Life which never lives to die.

The Sister of the Birch

It is the Voice of Love which never slumbers or sleeps.

[*The light dies out and leaves the Hall of Wisdom in darkness. Three bird-like forms enter. The likeness of a white bird flits near the Pilgrim of the Sky, singing, and flies towards the North. The Pilgrim of the Sky follows it and disappears. The likeness of a red bird flies singing towards the South, and the Ocean Wanderer follows it. The likeness of a honey-coloured bird flies*

singing towards the West, and the Sister of the Birch follows it. On leaving the Hall of Wisdom the guests descend a flight of steps and follow a winding corridor leading to the other apartments of the Cave. They see their way in the dark.]

The Likeness of a White Bird sings

I soar high in the air
And sing to the sun,
I fly back to my emerald nest
And lay me down to dream and rest.

The Likeness of a Red Bird sings

I fly, I fly, I fly,
Ceaselessly in storm and rain;
The billows of the sea
Rise high, high, high.

The Likeness of a Honey-Coloured Bird sings

In the gold of twilight
I flutter, flutter, flutter;

In the silver of moonlight
I twitter, twitter, twitter.

[*Another part of the Cave. The Room of Rest. A silver door inset with jade opens and the Pilgrim of the Sky enters. The room contains a bed and chairs of soft downy ether. The lofty roof is vaulted, and within the chief arch are many interlacing arches carved out of the solid rock. The apex of the vault is adorned with an exquisite mosaic work in sapphires, rubies and emeralds, depicting a lake full of lotuses. The walls are covered with a kind of enamel which lends them the transparency of air, suggestive of a dim horizon seen from a great altitude. The Pilgrim of the Sky feels as though he were in mid-air. From this room a door opens into a further apartment. Here there are three V-shaped bathing pools, lined with mother-*

of-pearl. The water in them is so transparent as to be invisible. It is gathered from the high fleecy clouds that float in the upper atmosphere. In each pool is a precious stone which medicates the water and regulates its temperature. The bather is to bathe in the first pool at dawn, in the second at noon, and in the third at sundown. On emerging from the first he stands before a marble-framed mirror. His physical health is renewed and he sees his gross body. After the noonday bath he stands before a ruby-framed mirror and no longer sees his gross body but only his spirit-life, like a white, transparent glow. On rising out of the evening bath he stands before a diamond-framed mirror and sees neither his gross body nor his spirit-life but only his Divine Essence.

A pencil of light moves across the ceiling indicating time. To the West

of the bathing-pools a door leads into the Chamber of Meditation. Here, fixed within a hollow in the centre of the room, is a seat like six blue lotuses rising one out of another with the space of a man's stature between them. The petals are of ether, and in the heart of each lotus is a seat of air, compressed and held together by the ether petals. The seat glows faintly and has the tint of the sky. The Chamber is dark. The Pilgrim of the Sky, after having bathed, seats himself in the lowest lotus. Immediately he feels that he has no body but only self-consciousness. In a few moments he experiences union and perfect ecstacy. He knows not how long he remains there, but presently he feels himself being led into the next apartment. Here there is a glow like dawn-light, but no lamp is to be seen. In the centre of the room is a table of sunset-coloured

stone on which stands a jewelled cup and beside it is a spoon of the colour of the mountain pyrola. The cup holds nectar—called Solsudha—of the tint of sunrise glow on snowy peaks. In the spoon is set a rose-coloured stone which possesses the virtue of changing the colour of the nectar, turning it violet, indigo, blue, green, yellow, orange and red. When it turns red the Pilgrim of the Sky drinks it. Seven times he drinks and each time the nectar takes on the seven colours.

The Pilgrim of the Sky returns to the Room of Rest. He lies down. Instantly the bed turns and hangs inverted, poised in the air, in such wise that the sleeper's head is downwards and his feet point upwards. The Pilgrim of the Sky feels nothing strange in this. He neither falls from the bed nor does he feel its touch upon

his body. He sleeps profoundly but without breathing or closing his eyelids. He is not aware how long he sleeps, but he wakes with a sense of wonderful refreshment. He feels like a new-born babe and cannot recollect his name or age, his parents or his habitation. Nor does he even feel any desire to know these outward accidents of life. He sits in the ether chair dreaming of himself as the Soul of the Universe. It is no dream—it is a great Awakening into Unity.]

[*The Ocean Wanderer is led through many tortuous passages deep into the Southern part of the Cave until he reaches the Chamber of Sleep. On entering he hears faint drowsy music. A dim mild twilight fills the room. The bed is spread with mountain moss. The walls are of porphyry and the high arched roof is painted with pictures of the sea and sailing ships. In the floor there is a door leading to a lower apartment, brightly illuminated, as if by the noonday sun. Here, near one of the walls stands a table bearing a jewelled golden goblet and a silver amphora filled with rosy pomegranate wine. He drains the cup many times but feels neither satiated nor intoxi-*

cated. The more he drinks the greater is his desire to drink, and the wine in the amphora never grows less.

From this room a flight of steps leads up to the Hall of Pastime. Here the Ocean Wanderer sees all kinds of games—chess, dice, puzzles and innumerable scientific toys.

From the Hall of Pastime a door opens to a sloping passage. The Ocean Wanderer follows it and finds that it leads to a cavern. There is dense darkness inside, and the cavern seems to him of infinite dimensions. He hears strange rumbling subterranean noises, sometimes changing to ghostly voices. They grow so terrible and overpowering that he almost swoons away. But the place fascinates him and he is eager to explore its mysteries. He discovers that there is a lake within the cavern and he feels a great desire to plunge into it and swim to its further

shore. He dives into the water. It tastes extremely salt and his body floats on the surface. In spite of the dark he swims easily, for he seems to see with the tips of his fingers. *He soon reaches land, which he judges to be a small island. He walks a little way and comes upon a round house of glass. He finds the door and enters. He is in a lighted apartment, the walls and ceiling of which are of looking-glass. Wherever he looks he sees nothing but the reflection of himself. Upon closer examination he finds that the figures and features reflected in the glass are not exactly identical with his own and yet they are not entirely non-identical. This rouses his curiosity. At the foot of each image is written in letters of light "born in the year ——, died in the year ——," and underneath a name. The images present the features and costumes of many nationalities.*

Some of them are old, some of middle age, others youthful. Others again are mere children or even unborn babes.

He tries to count them, but to his great astonishment as soon as he has finished he finds that they have all disappeared and have been replaced by new images. This occurs every time he counts so he abandons the attempt in despair. He is beginning to wonder what may be the meaning of these images when his eye catches an inscription written in letters of light in the centre of the ceiling. It is so dazzling that he cannot read it, but after a search he finds a little piece of tinted glass and with its help he reads: "I am all these—a Wanderer of the Ocean."

He then discovers a small trap-door in the floor and descends by a staircase to the room below. Here too the

walls are mirrors, reflecting the figures of men and women. On the ceiling in letters of light he sees written: "My friends"—but he recognises no one. He opens a side door and enters another room. It is dark and full of sounds like a confusion of many voices. At first he can distinguish nothing, but after a while he clearly hears a voice speaking.]

Voice in the Dark

I am the Builder, the Builder,
In the dark I work;
I am the Maker, the Maker,
I have made thy heart and thy head
From the clay of thy thoughts—thine own soul-born thoughts;
The seed-grown harvest am I, garnered by thee to nourish life;
Lo! from thine ashes I bring forth a life — new, yet ancient as the heavens.

I work out thy wish, I weave thee garlands of fancy;
I hold the hieroglyphic book of thy dark days yet unborn
By thine own hand inscribed—lost now, alas! in the dim ocean of oblivion.
The thread of my deathless Being I stretch unbroken from infinity to infinity,
And thy life I perfume with the honey of the wilds—now strangely sweet, now sweetly bitter.

[*The Ocean Wanderer listens in rapt silence, standing in the massive darkness of the Chamber of Oblivion beneath the dark waters of the unseen lake. He tries to weave together in thought the meaning of the Chamber of Mirrors with that of the Chamber of Oblivion, but his mind is distracted and thinking seems to him as impossible a feat as swimming from one Pole to the other.*

Cold, weary, well-nigh dead, he casts himself down on the ground, and lying there—like a dead ghost in a cavern of dead ghosts—he dreams strange dreams. All the images of the first Chamber of Mirrors appear before him, and a gaunt, shadowy figure with eyes like glowing coals approaches him.]

The Lady of the Shadows (*in a hollow voice, pointing a bony finger to the images*)

Behold your own past lives! Many times have you lived and many times have you died!

[*A moment of awful silence follows. The second Chamber of Mirrors appears.*]

The Lady of the Shadows (*with a ghostly laugh*)

Behold your parents, friends and lovers!

[*The Ocean Wanderer sees the fathers and mothers, wives and friends of his many past incarnations, all stretching out their arms to him in greeting. He now recognises each one of them, and as he recalls their many acts of kindness he is moved to tears. The homes of each childhood pass like bright pictures before his mind. But as soon as he turns to a new image, he instantly and completely forgets the foregoing one. In perfect reality he lives over again all his past lives although they are countless in number and extend over countless years. He sees that there is no town, no village, no place on this earth where he has not been. The youth of each life, with all its sad and sweet associations, comes rushing into his mind. He embraces once again his former loves. How beautiful their faces, how fresh and youthful! They talk of former days,*

and make many protestations of love. With some of them he finds himself walking under a cloud of darkness, and the cloud suddenly descends between them, hiding them from each other's eyes. Playmates and friends once more take him by the hand. His children come to greet him, and he embraces them.]

The Lady of the Shadows

You have never thought of death in this life. Now you see how powerful is death.

The Ocean Wanderer (*in dream*)

I have never thought of death in this life—now I see how powerful is life. What is most terrible is not death but the war between life and death. See, I am still alive, though I have suffered death many million times. I do not understand why this war between life

and death should be. I see no play of Divine Wisdom in this vast catastrophe. Since God does not seem to do anything to put an end to this war of life and death, it is plainly man's duty to devise some means of prolonging the span of life.

The Lady of the Shadows (with a laugh that wakes a ghostly echo)

Think of it—Man, the worm Man, defying Death!

The Ocean Wanderer

Why should Death defy Life? Why should Life be victim of Death? I have been defeated by Death so many times, yet even to-day I am alive. This fact alone—the fact of the power of life to survive—is enough to convince me that life is capable of continuing itself to infinity. Think of the patience and the skill of life! It has built up

this body—this body of infinite providence—as many million times as it has been destroyed by death. No other power than life is worthy the name of providence. For what is providence but patience, skill and foresight? These three mighty powers are the allies of life, and by their aid I will conquer death. I will make this life of nerve and bone and flesh immortal. How sublime a thought—Life living perpetually, perpetually enjoying the spectacle of this ocean!

[*The Ocean Wanderer rises and walks up and down in dream.*]

But how to make the body immune to the attacks of disease, decay and old age? In my younger days I studied medicine for twelve years, but I was disappointed with the achievements of medical science. We are as yet far from knowing all the properties of plants and

minerals. In our colleges we hope to learn the principles of life by dissecting dead bodies. Vain hope! Yet neither has vivisection succeeded in supplementing the deficiency. Nor do we yet know the effect upon life of such powers as gravitation, star-light, seismic waves, sub-oceanic electricity and upper ether. In what mysterious ways may not the solar light and the Polar rays influence life?

Many of the organic functions seem merely to help the process of waste. May not life therefore be kept whole and intact by stopping the functioning of these organs? We may even find that the exercise of the organs of breathing, assimilation and reproduction is inconsistent with the preservation of the individual life. Perhaps it is possible to be conscious in a more refined way of the pleasures which the nervous centres of these organs yield.

Yes, if life is to be perpetual in the body of the individual the perpetuity of the race-life must be sacrificed. By living perpetually the individual can realise the same end as we now hope to realise by perpetuating the life of the race. I will prove to the world that the highest goal of æsthetic, moral and intellectual life can be attained by perpetuating the physical life of the body. What progress I have made through the pains of many births and many deaths could have been achieved in a single span of bodily life uninterrupted by death. Death is the cause of all the wickedness of the world. It is by inflicting the pain of death upon his brother that man has brought so much evil to our earth. It was at the moment when man discovered his power to inflict pain and death upon another man that our true human evolution was checked. Then arose the necessity of

religious and ethical injunctions and prohibitions. But religion and ethic have but feeble power to stay the hand of murder and rapine. Think of the idiocy of our popular legislators who still believe in capital punishment as a remedy for murder!

I see clearly now—the worst sin, the greatest crime is—to die. Yea, to die death and to inflict death. Yet all those who die in the course of nature see nothing immoral in natural death, and all those who kill in war and in accordance with the demand of the law regard these modes of infliction of death as moral. But if a man suffering from an acutely painful and incurable disease, or a man whose hair is white with the snows of a hundred winters—if such men pray for euthanasia, then our wise owls who sit behind stained-glass windows or in imposing stone edifices at once hoot and screech. This is a

contradiction, yet nothing is more baffling to our understanding than to mark the boundary where human morality ends and cosmic necessity begins. Humanity subconsciously knows that death is the worst of criminals. The gospel of Eternal Life has been perverted by ignorant priests. Eternal life is here and now—in this body. Eternity is the birthright of Life. Come, O Angel of Eternity, and make me thine own!

The Lady of the Shadows
(with a dreadful laugh)

You are mad in your methods but sane in your reasoning. You are merely speculating, but life is as actual as radium. Look at me.

[*She touches the Ocean Wanderer on the brow and he sees a beautiful woman standing before him.*]

The Lady of the Shadows

According to lunar calculation this body of mine is about fifty million years old, and yet I am as fair and fresh as a maiden of twenty. I am the Keeper of the Cave-dweller's Garden of Perpetual Youth. He has taught me the secret of Eternal Living. All you have been saying is but a part of the truth. You are still far from the whole truth.

The substance of life-in-itself is eternal, but its *wholeness* has been impaired by the male energy having broken off from the female. But such is the power of life that even in its divided truncated state it contributes to the perpetuation of the species. Man contributes a part of his impressions and woman a part of hers, and thus the phenomenon of reproduction takes place. These impressions are

actualised by a temporary *wholing* of the divided life, involving the loss of the individual life. The madness of the original separation is punished by the destruction of each of the separated life-units.

Man has wounded woman, and injured woman has cursed man. Out of this violence done to Nature's conscience has arisen the death of progenitors, while the original eternity-of-life has assumed a totally different aspect in the form of the apparently perpetual species. This perpetuity is interrupted by death, which is the counterpart of the sleep of indifference of the original undivided life-whole. The substance of life goes through periods of *indifference* alternating with periods of *interested attention.* Under the Bo-tree I sleep through many ages; then I awake to do my work in the Garden. In sleep my mind-stuff and

my body remain in absolute stillness, but when I am awake my whole being vibrates with energy. I can see and hear and take part in all that is going on in the stars and the planets. At this moment I am talking to you, yet I am also conversing with my friends in Mars and Saturn. All parts of my brain are fully alive. Yet I am not a type of perfection. My friend the Cave-dweller has attained a perfection of body and mind which I cannot even dream of reaching.

The Ocean Wanderer

Are you a super-woman?

The Lady of the Shadows

I am neither a super-woman nor a sub-woman. If you wake up you will not see me at all. You can only see me in dream and that only if I so will.

The Ocean Wanderer

Your life seems to have reached what we should call the state of pure atom—of nascent, indestructible energy. So then between the primary life-atoms there is original sex-difference as there is qualitative difference between material atoms.

The Lady of the Shadows

Sex is a consciousness—it only becomes a moving energy in the secondary stage of evolution and thereby enters on the path of degeneration.

The Ocean Wanderer

Life then is the consciousness of living, and the process of living is tinted, so to speak, with self-consciousness. And the difference between one "liver" and another — and difference there must be in consciousness — is either "sameness" or "otherness."

The realisation of this internal difference of consciousness is "sex."

The Lady of the Shadows

The more you try to speculate the more you will fail in realisation. In this life you have not yet known woman and love. You are but a clever child. Life is not so easy to prove as a geometrical proposition. It is your ambition to live perpetual life, and you have not yet lived the most elementary life.

The Ocean Wanderer

This life I have spent on the ocean, and my companions have been sea-rovers. I have always delighted in deeds of daring and in exploring the unknown. But love was never a serious subject of study with me.

The Lady of the Shadows

You have wilfully neglected many opportunities of development. And

until to-day you have never wished to be immortal. Even now I doubt whether your time has come.

The Ocean Wanderer

I am ready. I will not weep over past folly. Tell me, O Lady of the Shadows, tell me—how shall I understand life, how shall I realise the dream of perpetual life?

The Lady of the Shadows

I was sent to you to test your fitness for initiation into the mystery of eternal life. Now I am satisfied that you are in earnest. A great change will come over your life—a change for your highest good. Have courage, raise your heart to higher things. At this moment the people of the Marble Palace are thinking of you, and your life will henceforth be moulded by their wise guidance. Do not try to know—like a child—

where the Marble Palace is and who its inmates are. I see your future clearly. A great love will flood your heart, and in the light of that love you will dimly see the road to eternal life. I will help you in my own humble way.

[*She gives him a little silk-coloured stone. The Ocean Wanderer stretches out his hand in dream and takes it.*]

The Lady of the Shadows

Keep this. It has all the virtues of which you are in need in the present stage of your evolution. Keep it close to your heart and never part with it. Let none ever see or touch it. And promise me that you will accept what the people of the Marble Palace send you. My duties now call me away. Farewell!

[*She touches the Ocean Wanderer on the brow and disappears. He falls*

into a deep dreamless slumber. On awaking he finds himself on the slope of a flower-covered hill at the foot of which lies a green valley. It is daylight and he hears human voices mingled with the whispers of the trees.]

The Sister of the Birch is led through a short straight passage to the Chamber of Dreams. A simple rustic door of palm leaves leads into it. The room is large, adorned with a profusion of beautiful flowering plants in full blossom and lit with the soft light of camphor candles. The bed is strewn with white jasmine petals. On the ceiling is a mosaic of marble and mother-of-pearl representing a spreading tree with a nest in it and a mother-bird feeding her young ones. A little door of interwoven olive-branches leads into another room. Here the floor is of ivy leaves and the walls are hung with delicate

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flowering creepers. In the middle of the room is a table spread with banana leaves upon which are fresh figs and almonds. A golden vase filled with the nectar of dates stands beside them, with a lotus seed-pod for cup and a lotus leaf for spoon. From this apartment a door of roses in full bloom opens into a garden with shady groves and bowers and grassy walks. Wandering here the Sister of the Birch comes upon a little rustic painting studio. It looks out on to a little hill covered with flowers of gorgeous hues. The garden seems to her the very playground of sumptuous summer. She takes brush and palette and begins to paint with delight.

Through the western window of the studio she sees a walk bordered with flowering plants and overhung with the branches of great trees forming natural shady arches. It is called the

Pearl Path for it is covered with pearls. She leaves the studio and follows the path. A gentle light plays on the green lawns, and a faint breeze blows, laden with the sweet scents of the flowers. As she walks she notices that no footprints are left on the path. After a while she sees a marble palace poised in mid-air like a shining cloud. Seen from below it looks like a city, with spires and domes and colonnades, and she greatly desires to see it more closely. She observes a slight rise in the ground underneath the palace, and going nearer she finds that it is a flower-bed. The flowers are so arranged as to form the motto: "Wait and hope." On reading these words she immediately sits down to prayer. After praying she opens her eyes and sees a little thread floating above her head. It is of the colour of the sky, and so transparent as to be

hardly visible. She stretches up her hand and grasps it, and finds that there are two threads closely intertwined, though both together are much finer than a single hair of her head. On trying to separate them she sees that they are bound together by cross-threads, set at a cubit's space from each other like the rungs of a ladder. It dawns upon her mind that this may lead to the Marble Palace. The thought of climbing so frail a ladder terrifies her, but somehow she feels sure that it is very strong, so she decides to venture. No sooner does she place her foot on the first rung than a little puff of air blows over her face, fragrant with the odour of a flower unknown to her. The aroma takes away the weight of her body, and with a feeling of wonderful ease and lightness she swiftly climbs the ladder—though it has a million rungs

—and reaches the Palace. A great dome surmounts the building, and the only entrance is from the top of the dome. It opens, and in spite of the absence of stairs the Sister of the Birch descends easily into the interior. The Palace is full of the most wonderful sights and sounds, and all is so different from what she is familiar with on earth that it is impossible to describe. A guide approaches her.

The Guide (*taking her by the hand*)

Do you wish to see the apartments of the Palace? It would take infinite time to see them all, but I will show you as many as you care to see.

[*The Sister of the Birch meets many men and women and talks to them, but she does not recognise any of them, al though they say that they have known*

her on earth. They have no body, but a misty white shimmering light surrounds their voice. Every one has a different colour, but the difference is so slight as to be scarcely discernible.]

The Guide.

The colour of the people here differs according to their life on earth. Those who have lived the life of wisdom are of a yellow colour; those who have led the life of action are of many shades. Their pursuits also differ according to the spiritual qualities they have developed on earth. The people of the Palace possess great powers and they can visit the earth at will, but the inhabitants of the earth cannot come here at will. They marry among themselves, but some of them secretly marry earthly individuals. Here no children are born, but those who wish for children can obtain them from the earth. They

love their foster-children tenderly and bestow great care upon them. The people of the Palace eat food, but they grow no corn. The earth grows food for them. They desire food chiefly in the autumn and on the anniversary of their death upon earth. They eat with their desire, not with the mouth. But they cannot eat unless the people of the earth offer them food with reverence and love. Children on earth who have their parents here should daily think of them and offer food to them — especially on all the solemn occasions of their lives — with as great love as they bore to them when they were on earth. It is even the duty of the children to educate and amuse their departed ancestors. The Temples of Education and the Halls of Amusement which you see here are echoes of the goodwill of the children of the earth.

[*He shows the Sister of the Birch great universities and theatres within the Palace.*]

Those who have loved each other on earth and have been loyal to each other all their lives meet here, and their love helps them to absorb much power from the atmosphere of the Palace. The continuity of the relation which has love for its inspiration is never snapped asunder.

[*The Sister of the Birch presently sees many happy couples whom she has known on earth, and she notices that they walk not side by side but face to face, looking steadfastly into each other's eyes. They walk with grace as if dancing together and singing. She also meets many who lived unhappily together on earth, and they walk with their backs towards each other. Some again are trying to hide behind each*

other, and when their eyes happen to meet each covers the other's eyes—the man covers the woman's eyes with his hand and the woman covers his with her hand.]

The Guide

These are unfaithful lovers. Soon they must go to the Temple of Fidelity to learn the duties of conjugal life.

[*She then sees men and women walking on their hands—sometimes with their feet in the air, sometimes on all fours. They are breathing hard and never stop to rest.*]

The Guide

These lived as bachelors and spinsters and believed in self-help. They will have to go to the "Colony of Happy Dependency."

[*Many curious sights pass before her eyes. A man shaped like a ball, followed by countless similar balls, is being rolled along on wheels of medals.*]

The Guide

This is a general and his army. They had their heads and hands and feet blown away. They are to take lessons in the School of "Shake hands with friend and enemy."

[*A man goes by with an enormous nose, bigger than his whole body. His nostrils dilate and contract continually.*]

The Guide

He lived on earth as a diplomat and was always trying to scent out the secrets of the friendly lands whither he was sent to represent his King. Soon he must join the School of "Each for all and none for his region."

[*She sees another man ceaselessly picking up handfuls of dust and putting it into his back pockets. He looks lean and hungry.*]

The Guide

He was a millionaire on earth and hoarded as much gold as he could all his life. He is to attend the School of Poverty.

[*Another man has lighted candles attached to all parts of his body, and his head is continually wheeling round. He has a telescope fixed to his right eye and a microscope to his left.*]

The Guide

He suspected every one all his life and believed in bacteriology. He will join the School of Trust and Good Sense.

[*A woman passes dragging a four-wheeler behind her. Every moment*

she rushes into it and comes out in a new dress. The Sister of the Birch counts that she changes five thousand times in the space of a minute. At every change she smiles and curtsies to the passers-by, but no one pays any heed to her.]

The Guide

All her life long she was true only to Fashion. She will go to the School of Sincerity. But would you not now like to see some of the other apartments of the Palace?

The Sister of the Birch

Yes, indeed, if I may be permitted.

[*Instantly she finds herself in another apartment. Her guide is still beside her. She now perceives that the rooms of the Marble Palace are not built side by side, but pervade and interpenetrate one another, like a cloud filled through*

and through with water and lightning and odour. They are one, yet many, and distinct from one another. As a piece of cotton when dipped in water is pervaded and penetrated by the water, or as an iron needle when heated in a flame is filled through and through with fire, so the first room pervades and penetrates the second. The way from one room to another is very wonderful.

In this second apartment the Sister of the Birch breathes quite a different atmosphere.]

The Guide

This is the Chamber of Psyche. Those who lived on earth as poets, authors and scientists dwell here.

[*The Sister of the Birch sees many poets, whose works she was familiar with on earth, seated on the "Summit of Poesy." Drawing nearer she sees many of the*

scenes and events described by the poets. The atmosphere is charged with a kind of picture-producing aroma.]

The Guide (*pointing to another hill at a little distance*)

There dwell the scientists. Do you wish to visit them?

The Sister of the Birch

I think I will not venture so far. But if I may express a wish, I should greatly like to see the poet who invented Tragedy.

The Guide

He is not to be seen, and it is best so. But if you ever meet him you are sure to love him.

[*The Sister of the Birch is silent, but she feels that her heart does not assent to his words. They now reach another apartment.*]

The Guide

Here dwell those who for the sake of Truth renounced the favours of fortune.

[*The light is so bright that the Sister of the Birch cannot open her eyes. She feels that many doubts are solving themselves in her mind. She has often wished to know whether the sex-constitution of human beings is final, but she has never dared to put the question to any one. Now the truth flashes across her mind.*]

The Guide (*reading her thoughts*)

Sex-consciousness continues as long as they are in the first Chamber. In the second Chamber the consciousness retires into the background and they lead a purely intellectual life. Here in the third Chamber they have harmonised in their person the male and female

principles. When the heart, which is the reservoir of love, expands so greatly as to embrace the universe of life the faculty of lust dwindles to a dot upon an "i."

[*She sees many great philosophers but dares not speak to them.*]

The Guide
(*pointing to a path in the distance*)

From the Hill of the Truth-seekers there is a road leading to the planet Jupiter. Great teachers from Jupiter come here to lecture from time to time. The students who are privileged to listen to them are required first to spend many years on the Summit of Poesy and in the Valley of Science.

[*He shows her a great amphitheatre standing in the midst of a large garden.*]

Here every winter is held the Inter-

planetary Synod of Truth-seekers. Philosophers, poets and scientists from all the planets are invited to give the result of their researches. The chair is always taken by a great philosopher from Jupiter. Their deliberations begin on the day of the sun's entering the Zodiac sign of the Waterbearer, and on the day of the sun's leaving that sign the meeting is dissolved. From your planet only two representatives are invited this year.

The Sister of the Birch

Am I permitted to ask the names of these two from the earth?

The Guide

It is not wise to tell their names, but as I trust you will not disclose the fact on your return I may say that they are from Gaurisankar Cave.

[*As he ceases speaking the Sister of the Birch sees before her a bright Being clothed in dawn-light. He bows graciously to her and then turns to the Guide.*]

The Bright Being

If it please the Sister of the Birch the Saints of the Hermitage send a greeting of welcome to her.

[*He disappears.*]

The Guide

If it be your wish to visit the Saints I will lead you to them.

The Sister of the Birch

I feel deeply honoured by their greeting.

[*Immediately they are in the Hermitage. The Saints live with their disciples on the slope of a mountain. Their dwellings stand on the circumference of a*

perfect circle, in the centre of which rises a green hill, while the whole is again encircled by an outer ring of mountains. The Sister of the Birch sees here many of the prophets, saints and saviours whose precepts she has tried to live up to on earth. She enters one of the dwellings. All the disciples as well as their Master rise to welcome her. They request her to seat herself. While sitting there she sees a youthful disciple light a torch at the altar-fire. He approaches her and bows to her.]

The Disciple with the Torch

Will you not give me your blessing?
I am bearing this torch to your planet.

[*He bows to his fellow-disciples and to the Master and leaves the room, stepping backwards with his face towards the Master. In a few moments he returns with the flame of the torch*

quenched. He lights it anew, bows to all and disappears. Again he returns with the light extinguished. Three times the youthful disciple endeavours to enter the earth with his lighted torch and three times he returns. He comes and stands before the Master.]

The Disciple

Master, three times have I borne the flaming torch to the portals of the earth and as many times has it been put out. And I heard the sound of a terrible storm raging within the earth.

The Master

My little father, we will wait until the storm has spent its fury.

[*The disciple bows his head in reverence and returns to his seat. The Sister of the Birch sighs. The Guide takes her to another Saint. He is standing with both hands uplifted, and the rays*

of the sun are focussed on the back of his hands and radiate in waves from his palms.]

The Guide

He is a friend of the earth and is sending peace-light to the earth. If you go nearer you will hear a song emanating from the wave-rays of his palms.

[*The Sister of the Birch approaches him and hears a song and wonderful music accompanying it :*]

In the air of morn, in the clouds of night
I fly ;
I am the Bird of Peace, I am the
Bird of Peace.
On ocean's waves I walk, I clip the
wings of the Storm ;
I am the Child of Light, I am the
Child of Light.

The red tongues of forest-fires I quench
with drops from the fleecy clouds;
I am the Guardian of Love, I am the
Guardian of Love.

The Guide

There are many other apartments in the Palace, but I fear that you will not be able to breathe the atmosphere of those parts.

The Sister of the Birch (*with a sigh*)

How I wish I had been here all my life! Here, it seems to me, men and women are in their proper element. They are not cumbered by a heavy body of flesh. Here they actually enjoy all those things which on earth we only fancy. Tell me, O Guide, when will it be my happiness to live in the Palace?

The Guide

The people of the earth cannot come

to the Palace at will. Nor are there many who even wish to come.

The Sister of the Birch

Ah, that is because they do not know what wonders the Palace holds. And many of us are taught that we have no right to come.

The Guide

Whatever he may profess to believe the earthly man has no real faith in the existence of the Marble Palace. At least there is no sign of such faith in the depths of his unconscious mind.

The Sister of the Birch

But women have faith. I know many who firmly believe that they will come here to live after their earthly death. As for myself, I have always wished to dematerialise. Several times in dream I have left my body and found

myself flying in the air. Once while fully awake I prayed to the Lord to release me from my body. At first I felt as though my soul were trying to break through my navel, and then I felt a great pain in my heart and all the blood rushed to my head—like a great river rushing forward. The sound was like the voice of many waters. And in a moment I found myself hovering over my body, like a flame floating in the air. In that state I dimly saw the Marble Palace and wished that I might enter it. But a beautiful spirit approached me and said in sweet accents: "You have still many duties on earth, but when you have fulfilled them all you shall come here and we shall be eagerly awaiting you." So I returned to my body. It looked horrible, and I felt an instinctive disgust for it. It seemed to me the most ugly thing on earth, although my friends used to call me the most

beautiful woman they had ever seen. But as I had no other alternative I entered into it again. When I awoke I found it impossible to love those around me any more. All men and women seemed ugly and unsightly. In the town I felt so unhappy that I went to live in a little village. But in time I grew weary of the village people too. To know them was like knowing a list of troubles and diseases. They live in my memory as Mr. Rheumatism, and Mrs. Headache and Miss Toothache. Their groans and complaints overwhelmed me, till at last I began to feel that my very life was a disease. This so alarmed me that I told it to my brother—the Pilgrim of the Sky—who is a very thoughtful man. He advised me to leave the village, so I began to wander among the forest trees. One day I heard a birch-tree speaking to me. He said, "I am the King of the Birches.

Come and live among us as our sister!" And from that day I made the birch-forest my home. I have many friends among the birches. Two of them are specially fond of me—I call them "Ruby Heart" and "Love of the Sun." Day and night I have prayed that my duties might be over, that I might be taken to the Marble Palace.

The Guide

All you say is true, but it is merely the expression of your conscious mind. Your unconscious mind is still wishing to cling to the earth.

The Sister of the Birch

I fear I cannot understand how my unconscious mind can be wishing one thing and my conscious mind another. I firmly believed that what I was wishing and praying for was the wish of my whole heart and mind and soul.

The Guide

Do you remember your words on reaching the door of Gaurisankar Cave? And do you remember to what God you have always offered your prayers?

[*She tries to recollect but in vain.*]

I will help you to remember. You said, "O Lord of the Earth, I am alive in the land of the living. May my children live after me." This kind of prayer is the utterance of your unconscious will to continue the life of the race.

[*The Sister of the Birch is very unhappy at these words. She realises that in her secret mind she has always been cherishing the desire to live on earth for ever. An incident suddenly recurs to her mind. Once when she was living in the birch-forest she saw a dying robin-redbreast and she wept*

at the sight of its agony. Seeing her in tears the bird spoke in human voice and said, "Do not weep for me. I am going to live in the Happy Forest." But she answered, "I want you to live in the birch-forest for ever." Now she understands that she loves the earth and wishes to live on earth perpetually.]

The Guide

You have no children, yet standing before the door of the Gaurisankar Cave you said, "May my children live after me!" Is it not your unconscious wish to make the earth your home and the home of those you would love?

[*The Sister of the Birch stands dismayed before the Guide and sheds profuse tears.*]

The Guide

Let not this make you unhappy. The men of the earth live a life of

light and shadow. You have lived the life of Duty, you have not yet known the life of Love.

[*The Sister of the Birch is about to reply, but the Guide seems to be listening to a voice in the distance. He turns as if conversing with some one in the air, but she hears no voices. A shining figure approaches.*]

The Guide

My duty is fulfilled. Henceforth he will be your guide. Follow him.

[*The Guide disappears. The bright figure draws near and takes her by the hand. She feels that it is a Friend.*]

The Bright Figure

It is the wish of the people in the Marble Palace that you return to the earth. I have come to help you to descend. It is far harder to go down

than to come up. But I will be with you. I am the Friend of the Way, the companion of all who go down. To come up they need not my aid.

[*He waves his hand in a circle above the ground and it opens wide beneath their feet. Together they leap into the opening, and it closes over them. The Sister of the Birch hears a voice singing:*]

Song in the Air

The pebbles of the stream are rolling,
rolling, rolling;
The bubbles of the stream are floating,
floating, floating;
The waters of the stream are flowing,
flowing, flowing.

[*The song dies away, and she finds that they are resting in mid-air. The bright figure is at her side. They*

feel no fatigue. She sees a little house in the air.]

The Friend of the Way

This is the resting-house on the way. Let us enter.

[*They enter the house together. A venerable figure advances to welcome them.*]

The Daughter of the Clouds

Here we give our guests new garments.

[*She gives a beautiful garment to the Sister of the Birch, who puts it on. Immediately she feels a great longing for the earth.*]

The Friend of the Way
(*perceiving her thoughts*)

Soon we shall be on the earth. How beautiful it looks from here!

[*The Sister of the Birch sees the earth rising like a dim ring from the milky sky. She turns and gazes upwards, but she can no longer see the Marble Palace.*]

The Friend of the Way

Travellers to the earth cannot see the Marble Palace from here. This is the home of the Daughter of the Clouds. She weaves garments for earth-bound pilgrims.

The Daughter of the Clouds ..
(*approaching the Sister of the Birch*)

Many ages have I lived here, and now I am old and my eyes are dim. Day and night I sit alone weaving garments for all who pass this way. I weave them out of clouds, and all the men and women of the earth have been clothed by me.

The Friend of the Way

It is now time to depart. We shall travel to the earth in a car of rain.

[*They enter a raindrop and it begins to speed through the air. It is painted with rainbow colours, and there is music and song within. The Sister of the Birch hears a voice singing:*

"On the wings of dream my heart flies back to my home—my home—my home."

She joins her voice with the invisible singer's. After a time they reach a birch-forest, where they alight.]

The Friend of the Way

Here I must bid you farewell. The Marble Palace is your home, but you will dwell in this birch-forest until I return. And a guest will come to your door.

[*He shows the Sister of the Birch a beautiful house in the midst of the forest.*]

Come, with my own hand I will kindle a fire on your hearth, and I will light a lamp in your hall which all the winds of the forest shall never blow out. Welcome the guest—the storm-beaten guest—and let him sit by the fire of the hearth in the light of the hall.

[*They enter the house. A rainbow arches over the portals resting on rainbow-coloured pillars. As she crosses the threshold the Sister of the Birch feels that the whole house—every door, every window—is ringing with the voice of welcome. She seems to hear a song:*

"Come, come, come, O thou Openness of the Fields,
Come, come, come, O thou Fragrance of the Wilds."

The song moves her to tears, and as it dies away she looks afar into the air and sings:

"Come, come, come, O thou Playmate of the Brooks."

The Friend of the Way looks up and gazes into her wide-open eyes. He lights a lamp in the hall and kindles a fire on the hearth. They go through all the rooms, and the Sister of the Birch feels that she already knows the house and everything is just as she desires.]

The Friend of the Way

Promise that you will ever tend this fire and will be the sweetest light in the eyes of the guest.

[*The Sister of the Birch bows her head, with tears in her eyes.*]

The Friend of the Way

Now I am happy. Day and night I shall stand at your door under the rainbow arch. But you will not see me.

The Sister of the Birch

When, when shall I see you again, O Friend of the Way?

The Friend of the Way

When the sun, completing his seventieth journey round the circle of the Zodiac, shall enter the House of the Celestial Waterbearer, then shall I come again. On that day you will be welcomed back to the Marble Palace.

[*He touches her hand and disappears. She falls into a deep sleep. On waking she finds herself in the Garden near a bed of forget-me-nots. The Ocean Wanderer approaches and together*

they go back to the Cave. In the Hall of Conversation they find the Pilgrim of the Sky awaiting them. The hour of departure is near at hand and they go to bid farewell to the Cave-dweller. They enter the Temple of Prophets. The Cave-dweller is conversing with a prophet who is to be sent on earth to teach the great Mother-Wisdom. All the prophets of ancient times are present and listen to his words in silence. The three guests seat themselves. The Cave-dweller speaks.]

The Cave-dweller

The revolving cycle of seasons is bringing in its train rains and storms and thunder. Great clouds are gathering even now on the Western ocean. Ere long their shadows will darken the green fields and white rivers. Many an ancient tree will be blasted by the

lightning. But these mountain summits will enjoy perpetual sunshine. The Star of Peace will always be seen from these heights, but to the people of the valley it will be invisible.

(*With folded palms and eyes fixed above.*)

I sing unto Thee this chant of praise
And from my heart and soul I pray,
O Mother—lead us, lead us unto Peace.

I bow my head and bend my knee
At Thy feet and seek Thy forgiveness;
O Mother—deliver us, deliver us from Bondage.

Let the sky and the air and the waters
Be filled with Thy love and Thy mercy;
O Mother—give us, give us Thy blessing.

May Truth come to man and to woman,
And Right and Pity and sweet Charity;
O Mother—save us, save us from the shadows.

[*The Pilgrim of the Sky and all the prophets join in the chant. The Cave-dweller rises and advances towards the guests.*]

The Cave-dweller
(*addressing the Pilgrim of the Sky*)

Farewell, dear friend. We meet again.

[*He approaches the Ocean Wanderer and the Sister of the Birch who are standing side by side. With his right hand he takes the hand of the Ocean Wanderer and with his left the hand of the Sister of the Birch.*]

The Cave-dweller (*in a tender voice*)

Farewell! The Light of the Lamp shall brighten your hall and the Fire on the Hearth shall gladden your home.

The three friends leave the Cave and the door closes behind them. They walk in silence. The Pilgrim of the

Slowly walks on alone. The Sister of the Birds turns to cast a last look at the Cave door. She sees no sign of it. She goes back a little way and the Ocean Wanderer follows her. They find nothing but masses of ancient snow gathered under the great Gauri-sankar Height.

THE END

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